

Message Text

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CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 2954

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT CH

SUBJ: TENG HSIAO-PING AND THE RED CHAMBER

1. SUMMARY: A KWANGMING DAILY ARTICLE OF MARCH 13 DISCUSSING THE DREAM OF THE RED CHAMBER APPEARS TO TAKE A BRIEF BUT CRITICAL SWIPE AT THE RAPID POLITICAL RESURGENCE OF PARTY VICE CHAIRMAN TENG HSIAO-PING. THE ALLEGORICAL DIG IS DELIVERED WITHIN A DISCUSSION ABOUT HOW HIGH RANKING OFFICIALS IN THE "FEUDAL SOCIETY" ALWAYS STOOD ABOVE THE LAW IN CONTRAST TO THE LOT OF THE COMMON PEOPLE. THE ARTICLE SINGLES OUT THE EXAMPLE OF AN ARROGANT AND UNPRINCIPLED CHING DYNASTY OFFICIAL WHO ROSE RAPIDLY BUT WAS CRITICIZED AND DEMOTED. BY RELYING ON HIS INFLUENCE WITH THOSE IN POWER HE NOT ONLY REGAINED HIGH POSITION, BUT WENT ON TO FILL A MAJOR ADMINISTRATIVE VACANCY IN THE CAPITAL ULTIMATELY BECOMING THE MINISTER OF WAR. THE RESEMBLANCE OF THIS FICTIONAL CAREER TO TENG'S ACTUAL EXPERIENCES IS OF COURSE STRIKING. END SUMMARY

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2. DURING THE ANTI-LIN, ANTI-CONFUCIUS CAMPAIGN, SEVERAL

COMMENTARIES ANALYZED THE FAMOUS CLASSICAL NOVEL DREAM OF THE RED CHAMBER IN POLITICAL TERMS. THE CONSENSUS OF SUCH ANALYSIS IS THAT IT WAS PRIMARILY A POLITICAL NOVEL WHICH ACCURATELY DESCRIBED THE UGLY SIDE OF "FEUDAL" SOCIETY BEFORE IT GAVE WAY TO "NEWLY EMERGING" CAPITALIST SOCIETY. THIS IS ALSO THE VERDICT OF THE AUTHOR OF A MARCH 13 ARTICLE IN KWANGMING DAILY, AND HE GOES ON TO EXAMINE SEVERAL CASES IN THE NOVEL TO SHOW HOW LAWS AND PENALTIES DID NOT REALLY EXTEND TO THE SINS OF GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. HE CONTENTS THERE WAS ALWAYS A "PROTECTIVE SHIELD FOR OFFICIALS" IN CONTRAST TO THE LOT OF THE COMMON PEOPLE.

3. THE ARTICLE ALLUDES TO AN UNUSUAL QUOTE FROM MAO TO THE EFFECT THAT THE EMPEROR IN FEUDAL SOCIETY ALWAYS "APPOINTED OFFICIALS IN CHARGE OF THE ARMED FORCES" AND THAT OTHER HIGH RANKING OFFICIALS WERE ALWAYS NOMINATED BY THE EMPEROR. THOSE WHO HELPED THE EMPEROR ASCEND THE THRONE HAD ALWAYS HANDED TOGETHER AND ANY COMPLAINTS LODGED AGAINST THEIR CORRUPTION SANK "LIKE ROCKS IN THE VAST SEA."

4. A MAN WHO "VIVIDLY EXEMPLIFIED THIS KIND OF PROTECTIVE FAVORITISM," SAYS THE ARTICLE, WAS AN OFFICIAL IN THE NOVEL BY THE NAME OF CHIA YU-TS'UN. THE KWANGMING DAILY SAYS THAT THE AUTHOR OF THE NOVEL COULD ONLY TOUCH LIGHTLY ON HIS CHARACTERIZATION OF CHIA FOR FEAR OF "OFFENDING THE IMPERIAL COURT." CHIA IS DESCRIBED AS A MAN WHO ROSE AND FELL, THEN ROSE ONCE AGAIN IN FEUDAL OFFICIALDOM. AT FIRST, BECAUSE HE WAS SCHOLARLY AND APPLIED HIMSELF HE ADVANCED SMOOTHLY; "BUT NOT LONG AFTERWARD, HE WAS CENSURED AND LOST HIS OFFICE." KWANGMING DAILY APPEARS TO BLAME CHIA'S ARROGANCE OVER HIS ABILITY AS ONE REASON FOR HIS DOWNFALL. INITIALLY, CHIA DID NOT ALIGN HIMSELF WITH ANY OF THE FOUR LEADING FAMILIES; AFTERWARDS, SEEING THE LIGHT, HE GAINED SPONSORS AMONG KEY MEMBERS OF THE BIG FAMILIES AND AN AUDIENCE WITH THE EMPEROR; HE WAS REINSTATED, SOON BECOMING A CANDIDATE FOR "VACANCIES IN THE CAPITAL." CHIA IS CHARACTERIZED AS AN AMBITIOUS PERSON, WHO IN QUEST OF HIGH OFFICE "ATTACHED NO IMPORTANCE TO HUMAN LIFE." THUS, HE TOOK A "BIG STEP UPWARD" INTO THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT; HE WAS APPOINTED MINISTER OF WAR AND BECAME A "VERY INFLUENTIAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

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POWERFUL BIGWIG" ASSISTING IN "ADMINISTRATION OF MILITARY AFFAIRS AND IN PLANNING FOR AFFAIRS OF STATE." THE ARTICLE GOES ON TO NOTE THAT CHIA IN AN UNJUST ACT MURDERED A POOR SCHOLAR AFTER MOVING UP TO THE CAPITAL, BUT IT SAYS NOTHING ABOUT CHIA'S CAREER BEYOND THIS POINT.

5. COMMENT: THE PARALLEL BETWEEN THE FICTIONAL CAREER OF CHIA AND THE ACTUAL EXPERIENCE OF TENG HSIAO-PING IS STRIKING,

ESPECIALLY THE FINAL FILLIP OF HIGH MILITARY OFFICE.

INTERESTINGLY NOTHING IS SAID IN THE ARTICLE ABOUT THE RESTORED OFFICIAL'S ULTIMATE FATE. THE ALLEGORICAL JAB AT TENG COMES AT A TIME WHEN OTHER RECENT ARTICLES HAVE ALLEGORICALLY LIONIZED HIM FOR HIS ADMINISTRATIVE ABILITY AND FOR HIS SERVICE AGAINST THE SOVIETS (SEE HONG KONG A-42). THE SNIPING AT TENG COULD COME FROM SEVERAL QUARTERS, BUT IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT IT WAS DELIVERED THROUGH PEKING'S KWANGMING DAILY, AN ORGAN MUCH INVOLVED WITH CULTURAL MATTERS. IT WILL BE RECALLED THAT IT WAS KWANGMING DAILY THAT LAST JULY 23 CARRIED AN ALLEGORICAL ARTICLE THAT MADE SUFFICIENTLY CRITICAL ALLUSION TO MAO AND HIS REGIME AS TO CAUSE THE PIECE TO BE RECALLED AND TO BE QUIETLY REPLACED (HK 8899, AUGUST 6, 1974). SUCH ACTION, HOWEVER, APPARENTLY HAS NOT DETERRED FURTHER POLITICAL ALLEGORIES IN KWANGMING DAILY.

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